

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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R 180745Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3598
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY MANILA
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 2859

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TW, CH, US
SUBJECT: ATTITUDES TOWARD CONTACTS WITH PRC

REF: (A) TAIPEI 2517 (NOTAL), (B) TAIPEI 2782, (C) STATE 111933
(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THAT SOME CHINESE HERE HARBOR
A LATENT ATTRACTION TO THE MAINLAND, WE DOUBT THAT THIS
SENTIMENT WILL MANIFEST ITSELF IN ANY POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT
WAY IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

1. HISTORICALLY, TAIWANESE, LIKE CHINESE ELSEWHERE, HAVE
TENDED TO HAVE A CULTURAL RATHER THAN A NATIONAL OR POLITICAL
DEFINITION OF CHINA. THE DEGREE OF TAIWAN'S OWN POLITICAL
ASSOCIATION WITH THE MAINLAND HAS WAXED AND WANED WITH THE
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STRENGTH OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, AND OF COURSE THERE
HAVE BEEN LONG PERIODS SUCH AS THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION WHEN
NO POLITICAL CONNECTION EXISTED AT ALL. NEVERTHELESS,
TAIWANESE HAVE PERSISTED IN CONSIDERING THEIR CULTURE
DEFINITELY CHINESE, AND THIS HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT FACTOR
IN PREVENTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL BASE FOR
TAIWANESE SEPARATISM. CHINESE WHO CAME TO TAIWAN AFTER

THE COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER OF THE MAINLAND STRONGLY SHARE THE SAME SENSE OF CHINESE CULTURE, THOUGH THEY OFTEN TEND TO BE LESS GENEROUS IN REGARDING TAIWAN AS A CERTIFIED PART OF IT.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS COMMON CULTURAL ATTRACTION, WHICH CUTS ACROSS THE TAIWANESE/MAINLANDER DIVISION, IS THE BASE FROM WHICH REUNIFICATION SENTIMENT SPRINGS. (THE REUNIFICATION SENTIMENT WE ADDRESS IN THIS CONTEXT IS NOT THE ROC NATIONAL IDEOLOGY OF RETAKING THE MAINLAND, BUT A FEELING THAT CHINA SHOULD BE REUNITED POLITICALLY UNDER AN UNSPECIFIED REGIME.) ALTHOUGH IN RARE CASES THIS SENTIMENT MAY BE EXPRESSED IN COMMUNIST TERMS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE SUCH FORMULATION IS AT ALL POPULAR, AND OF COURSE THE GROC ACTIVELY DISCOURAGES IT. IT IS PERHAPS MORE POPULAR, AND CERTAINLY MORE PERMISSIBLE, TO EXPRESS REUNIFICATION SENTIMENT IN VAGUE CULTURAL TERMS BASED ON THE PREMISE OF A COMMON CHINESE IDENTITY. SUCH EXPRESSION, WHETHER ORAL OR WRITTEN (AS IN THE CASE OF THE HUMANIST ARTICLES REPORTED IN REF B), OFTEN SHOWS EVIDENCE OF HISTORICAL CHINESE XENOPHOBIA.

3. IN OUR JUDGMENT, REUNIFICATION SENTIMENT IS AND HAS BEEN DECREASING BECAUSE ITS BASIS, THE TRADITIONAL IDEAL OF A UNIFIED AND UNIFYING CHINESE CULTURE, HAS BEEN BADLY ERODED. PEOPLE HERE GENERALLY SUBSCRIBE TO THE OFFICIAL GROC VIEW THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE DESTROYED TRADITIONAL CHINESE HIGH CULTURE ON THE MAINLAND, AND THUS ITS ATTRACTIVENESS IS DIMINISHED. HERE IN TAIWAN, SOME FACETS OF THAT CULTURE HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY WEAKENED BY MODERNIZATION AND

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THAT CULTURE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE ITS DECLINE DESPITE GROC EFFORTS TO REVIVIFY IT.

4. NOR HAS US/CHINA POLICY OF RECENT YEARS SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED LOCAL ATTITUDES TOWARD TAIWAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MAINLAND. FAR FROM PROMPTING LOCAL SENTIMENTS OF CHINESE SOLIDARITY, OUR POLICY APPEARS TO HAVE PROMPTED ALMOST ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE POLITICALLY LITERATE TO HOPE FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO, AND/OR TO MAKE PLANS TO LEAVE TAIWAN IF THE GOING GETS TOO ROUGH.

5. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE SEE VERY LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT LOCAL FORCES HERE WILL PROMPT ANY INITIATIVES TOWARD REUNIFICATION. THE CURRENT TAIPEI GOVERNMENT AND ANY FORESEEABLE GOVERNMENT HERE IS MOST UNLIKELY TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THE PRC UNLESS IT WERE TO FEEL UNDER DIRECT MILITARY THREAT (SEE REF A, PARA 32).

6. WILL POUCH TEXTS REQUESTED IN REF C, PARA 2.

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